



# Newsletter Spring 2016

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## New PS 2000 Career Advising Course

The Department has created a new one-credit course—PS 2000: Political Science and International Relations as a Profession—and it is a requirement for all majors who started as of Fall 2015. Students who started before last Fall, of course, are also welcome to take the course.

This is the first semester this course has been offered, and we are very excited about it. An awful lot of students come to us in their junior or senior year unsure what they want to do with their career. We have all had seniors in our offices, and, when we ask “What do you plan to do after graduation?,” we are met with a long pause and a “Well, I haven’t really thought about it, but I guess I’ll look for a job.” PS 2000 is aimed at preventing this; we want students to have clear career plans and to be in the best possible position to achieve their professional goals.

It is extremely important for students to think about and plan for several career options, and PS 2000 is designed to help students do this early in their academic career at MTSU. Professional careers don’t magically happen; to realize their preferred careers, students need to plan and work to put themselves in the best possible position to achieve their goals.

In PS 2000, students will work through four modules:

- In the first module, students will discuss the different degree programs in the Department and what they can do with each degree, and assess their own individual interests, skills, and career goals.

- In the second module, students will discuss the range of opportunities available to ‘build a better resume’ while at MTSU—how to use different opportunities for internship, leadership, research, study abroad, and community service experiences to develop and demonstrate the skills needed to achieve their career goals.

- In the third module, students will discuss how to prepare for the years immediately after graduation, i.e., how to prepare for their first professional job, law

school admission, Ph.D. program admission, and career-oriented masters and certificate programs.

- In the final module, students will discuss job search skills and career mentoring.

Each student will have two main work products they take away from PS 2000. Each student will start an ePortfolio of their work product, skills, and experiences. Their portfolio will continue after the course ends, they can add to it each semester, and use their full portfolio for their later job searches, law school admissions, and graduate school admissions. Additionally, each student will work with their academic adviser to develop a career planning document—what their career goals are, what additional skills and experiences they need to develop to achieve these career goals, and what they can do during their remaining semesters at MTSU to gain these skills and experiences.

PS 2000 will be offered each semester, with numbers kept relatively small to allow for a lot of discussion and one-on-one attention. Majors can enroll as soon as they have completed one of the introductory courses, either PS 1005 or PS 1010, and the earlier students take the course in their academic program, the more time there will be to gain the skills and experiences for their own professional success.

## Tutoring for PS 1005, 1010 and 3001

Agnes Porter (PS 1005, 1010)

Kayla McCrary (PS 3001)

*In the library tutoring area*

See announcement for times

[www.mtsu.edu/politicalscience](http://www.mtsu.edu/politicalscience)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### First Annual (maybe) Political Science and International Relations Bike Ride

**Saturday, April 9, starting at 9:00 a.m.**



**Who?** Faculty, Staff, Students, Spouses, Kids, Friends

**Where?** Start and end at Two Rivers Park, by the Wave Pool in Nashville.

**How Hard Will It Be?** This will be a “no rider left behind” event—slow, easy, with as many stops as people want or need. Round-trip will be about 16 miles, but it is FLAT and we will go SLOW, so, if you can ride a bike, you can make it just fine. Road bikes, mountain bikes, commuter bikes, comfort bikes, cruisers, tandems, and recumbent bikes are all good.

**Traffic?** Almost the entire route will be on the Shelby Bottoms and Cumberland River Greenways, separated from traffic. There are just three blocks on the street between the greenways, and a two block detour off the greenway for a nice food and conversation break.

**Food?** At the half-way mark, we will take a leisurely break at Red Bicycle Coffee and Crepes, which has the best crepes in town—both sweet and savory.

**RSVP** to David Carleton (*sign-up sheet will be in the main office*)



**Coffee and Donuts during  
Final Exam week**

### *Night at the Predators* Feb. 18 vs. Boston Bruins



### *LSAT Practice Test and Prep Session*



Saturday, March 19, 8:00 am  
LSAT Practice Test

Wednesday, March 23, 6:00 pm  
LSAT Prep Session

Learn more about the law school exam and how to prepare. Room TBA

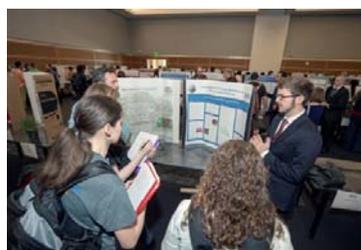
### *Spring Picnic* For PS / IR MAJORS and faculty

**Come celebrate the (near) end of  
semester and year with faculty  
and fellow students.**



**Saturday, April 23  
Noon-afternoon  
Barfield-Crescent Park  
Pavilion TBA**

### **Scholars Week 2016 March 28 - April 1, 2016**



**Submit Your  
Abstract  
Proposal for the  
Scholars Week  
Poster  
Exposition on  
Friday, April 1**

[Abstract Proposal](#) --Deadline: February 23, 2016 For information go to:

[www.mtsu.edu/research/scholarsWeek](http://www.mtsu.edu/research/scholarsWeek)

## ***Course Redesign Initiative***

MTSU's Student Success initiative includes a program years to redesign general education courses. Political Science and International Relations has participated in this program with Drs. Carleton and Lefer redesigning PS 1010 followed by Dr. Langenbach and Mr. Syler retooling PS 1005.

### **Redesigning PS 1010: Introduction to Global Politics**

by David Carleton

Over the last two years, Dr. Vanessa Lefler and Dr. David Carleton have experimented with ways to redesign the teaching of PS 1010: Introduction to Global Politics. PS 1010 is a foundational course in the Department and a General Education course taken by many non-majors. They have experimented with different teaching approaches to examine whether there are more effective ways to engage students with the course material.

Two overlapping efforts have been made:

-1- With a grant from the University, Dr. Lefler and Dr. Carleton developed a 'flipped' version of PS 1010. A 'flipped' classroom defines a classroom design in which students receive the content or material typically delivered in a lecture on their own, through videos, recordings, and readings while devoting most class time to problem solving exercises and simulations that apply the concepts. They developed the readings and videos for students to complete outside of class, and developed a whole series of classroom exercises designed to allow students to use, apply, and develop the concepts in these materials. Dr. Lefler and Dr.

#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

MAJORS -- 295  
-- 68 GENERAL FOCUS  
-- 132 PRE-LAW  
-- 25 PUBLIC ADM.  
-- 5 TEACHING LIC.  
-- 67 IR MAJORS  
MINORS  
-- 112 POL. SCI.  
-- 29 IR  
-- 15 PARALEGAL  
-- 16 POL. & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Carleton each piloted a section of PS 1010 using the flipped model during the Spring 2015 semester. Students in both the flipped and conventional sections were given pre and post tests to assess learning outcomes and attitudes regarding the different teaching approaches. Learning outcomes were not measurably different between the flipped and conventional classrooms, though students responded well to the exercises and the opportunities to apply concepts, and these materials are being used in some other PS 1010 sections.

-2- Dr. Carleton and Dr. Pedersen also developed a hybrid version of PS 1010, which combines aspects of both on-campus and on-line learning. The course is taught half online and half on campus. The significant on-line component provides students more flexibility and convenience than traditional on-campus courses. The online components can be completed when it is convenient or them to do the work, rather than being in class for set times several times a week. This can be very important for non-traditional students and students who need to work. The significant classroom component that remains ensures students still know their professor, can ask questions directly, and can interact with fellow students. This addresses the concern and dissatisfaction many students have with straight online courses. Many of the exercises developed for the flipped redesign have also been integrated into the hybrid design. Dr. Carleton has offered hybrid sections two times (and again this semester), and the response has been very positive. Student feedback and evaluations have been very strong, and, more concretely, student grades have been higher than in comparable sections taught entirely on-campus or entirely on-line

## **Student Organizations**

**Society for International Affairs: New Faces, Community Outreach, Success for Model United Nations**

UN Student Alliance  
of MTSU



The Fall 2015 semester welcomed Dr. Vanessa Lefler as facilitator and faculty sponsor for the Model United Nations course and the Society for International Affairs (Model UN club). Dr. Lefler was excited to bring the experience of her own collegiate Model UN participation to the highly engaged team that brings together students from across the university. Their goals? To find avenues to solve problems in world

politics through the eyes of different national interests while also learning the art of diplomacy and negotiation.



The Society for International Affairs embarked on these goals, attending the Florida Model United Nations conference in October 2015. Kayo Beshir, Erika Helgeson, Caitlin Henderson, Joseph Kennedy, Casey Lawhorn, Deanna Mix, and Carson Turner represented the countries of Ecuador, Egypt, and the Maldives the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and members of a Spanish political movement and a European Commissioner in a simulation of the Spanish financial crisis. The club's first conference of year returned from Gainesville, FL, in style, thanks to their flight in the MTSU private jet and Carson Turner's Honorable Mention award as Ecuador in the General Assembly.

The Model United Nations class and Society for International Affairs, later in the Fall 2015 semester, welcomed high school students from Blackman Academy for a simulation of the UN Security Council's 1953 decision to intervene in the Korean War. Erika Helgeson, Caitlin Henderson, Morgan Hunlen, Joseph Kennedy, Samantha Kestner, and Carson Turner led approximately 16 Blackman students, inviting them to participate in the negotiations, debate, and voting on this landmark decision. Our Model UN program looks forward to sponsoring another exciting historic Security Council simulation later this semester.

Reflecting on her first semester as the Model UN facilitator, Dr. Lefler remarked, "A Model United Nations program is, ideally, run on the enthusiasm and interests that of its participants with the faculty sponsor providing the guidance and the right tools. Our group never disappointed me and I hope that I matched their energy. Looking forward, I hope to continue to develop our program -- both the class and the club -- to expose our students to challenging questions and to introduce them to some of the finer skills of statecraft."

The Society for International Affairs plans to attend two conferences in the Spring 2016 semester: the North American Model United Nations conference, 18-21 February, in Toronto, ON, Canada, and the Model United Nations conference at Emory, 31 March - 3 April, in Atlanta, GA.



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## Mediation Team



This year, our mediation team was very successful. Competing in two tournaments, — the Brenau University Invitational, in Gainesville, Georgia, and the International Academy of Dispute Resolution Tournament, in Des Moines Iowa — the team received numerous awards, including multiple awards for top advocate/client pair, and top team. The member of the team are: Austin Duke, Molly Gray, Jennifer Grissom, James “Cole” Hodge, Stephen Hughes, Emily Laffey, Joey Sanchez, Sierra Scivally and Jodi Shockney. Cole Hodge received an All-Worlds award for his work as a mediator. The team looks forward to next season, when they will be traveling to Austin, Texas, for the international tournament.

## Mock Trial

By John Hodges

MTSU's Mock Trial Team had another competitive fall season. After participating in three nationals invitational tournaments in Chicago, Champaign, Illinois and MTSU's Mid-South Tournament. These showings included a top ten finish at the



Dajah Sutton and Jodi Shockney

Illini-Invitational in Champaign, as well as individual awards won by Freya Cartwright and Cole Hodge. Individual awards were also won at the Thunder-dome Invitational in Chicago by Dajah Sutton and Jodi Shockney, as well as an awards won by Freya Cartwright at MTSU's Mid-South Tournament in November. After momentum from the fall, the mock trial team begins the spring journey this to the national championships in Greenville, South Carolina this April.



Cole Hodge

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## **Current Students**

This past December, **Asha Patel** (PS Major) was selected by the Organization "Doing Good" as the Nashville Volunteer of the Month in for her work with the student organization Ambassadors of VSA and with VSA Tennessee.



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Kent Syler's class studying the presidential primaries were on **News Channel 5+ OpenLine** in November discussing the latest developments in the primaries.



WTVF OpenLine anchor Ben Hall, Janita Hendricks, John Langsdon, Kent Syler, Brooke Grimsley, John Carter, Jami Averwater

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## ***Internships***

### **Fall semester 2015**

#### **Public Service internships:**

- **Sydney Bozeman** with Bulloch, Fly, Hornsby, and Evans attorneys
- **Jodi Shockney** with Congressman Scott DesJarlais
- **Molly Blankenship** with Reclaim Ourselves (survivors of domestic and sexual abuse)
- **Lauren Bradish** with Free for Life International
- **Zeen Tayib** with Tennessee Democratic Party
- **Terrah Trimble** with Bridges Domestic Violence Center
- **Kevin Donovan** with Tennessee Democratic Party
- **Aimee Sennes** with Metro Nashville Office of the Mayor
- **Joshua Cathey** with Memphis Area Legal Services

### **2016 Legislative Internship contingent and who they are working for:**

<b>Kelsey Beal</b>	Rep. Jon Lundberg
<b>Monica Burks</b>	Rep. Mike Sparks
<b>Thomas Coomes</b>	Sen. Frank Nicely
<b>Stephen Duke</b>	Rep. Bryan Terry
<b>John Gleason</b>	Rep. John Forgety
<b>Jennifer Grissom</b>	Sen. Bill Ketron
<b>Michael Hester</b>	Sen. Janice Bowling
<b>Sam Hubbell</b>	Rep. Jimmy Eldridge
<b>Olivia Nodine</b>	Rep. Tim Wirgau
<b>Denarius Stinson</b>	Sen. Jim Tracy
<b>Amanda Thompson</b>	Sen. Lee Harris
<b>Elizabeth Tullos</b>	Rep. Charles Sargent

*Students are strongly encouraged to do one or more internships as part of their program.*

*For internship opportunities, see the Bulletin Board or check your emails. Dr. Langenbach coordinates most internships for the department. Dr. Carleton coordinates the Legislative Internship and the Washington Center Program internship.*

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## ***Virtual Mentoring Program***

Contact former students now working in a variety of fields or in law or graduate school. Get tips and advice.

[www.mtsu.edu/politicalscience.virtualmentoring.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/politicalscience.virtualmentoring.php)

## Study Abroad

### 12 Students Study in Cuba in January by Joey Kennedy



Our trip to Cuba began on January 4<sup>th</sup> when we arrived at the Miami International Airport. We were flying a charter flight to Havana that was booked through a travel agent. We arrived in Havana and began our journey to our lodging arrangements. Upon arriving to the housing we were surprised to find that we were staying in apartment like rooms that even had air-conditioning! We were in Havana for our first seven days where we toured Old Havana, visited the United States Embassy, had a meeting with an organic farming NGO, visited Oscar Hemmingway's home, visited the Museum of the Revolution, and attended an orchestra performance. These days in Havana were full of activities, touring, and mingling with the locals. One interesting thing that we noticed were political billboards filled with messages regarding "el Bloqueo", the embargo between the US and Cuba. It was very interesting to hear the public's opinion of not only the US but of their own political situation. The people are very critical of their government, but also they were surprisingly understanding of their government's unique situation. The people are very aware of the political happenings of their country especially when it comes to the restoration of relations between Cuba and the US.

Following our stay in Havana, we moved to Trinidad for two days where we learned of the importance of sugar to the development and sustention of the country during the early 1900s. On our way to Trinidad, we visited Playa Girón, more commonly known as the Bay of Pigs, where we visited the Museum of the Bay of Pigs. It was interesting to view a film that was produced by Cubans to retell the events that led up to and followed the Bay of Pigs. Trinidad provided a unique look into the country's pre-revolution past.

Ultimately we visited Varadero where we saw the preparation that Cuba is taking on in order to support the anticipated tourism that will come with the potential allowance of easy, direct American travel to Cuba. Varadero is an area that seemed to be well equipped to handle Cuba's current tourist flow which reminded us much of Florida back in the 1980s and 1990s.



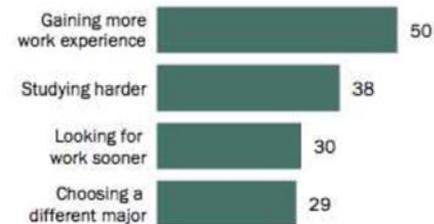
This trip offered us a unique opportunity to view Cuba as it is before the complete

normalization of relations between the US and Cuba, the preparation that Cuba is taking on to prepare for the flood of anticipated American Tourists, and see first-hand the consequences of an embargo.

## Avoiding Future Regrets

### College Days, Reconsidered

% who say doing each of the following while they were undergraduates would have better prepared them to get the job they wanted



Note: Based on those with at least a bachelor's degree (n=790). Voluntary responses of "Maybe" not included.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Q22a-d

Source: "What College Graduates Regret" *The Atlantic*  
[http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/02/what-college-graduates-regret/283808/?utm\\_source=SFFB](http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/02/what-college-graduates-regret/283808/?utm_source=SFFB)

## Faculty News

In the fall semester, **Lisa Langenbach** received two redesign grants for PS 1005. The MTSU redesign grant with **Kent Syler** was a redesign incorporating active hands on activities. The TBR redesign with **David Carleton** was a hybrid semi-flipped course involving much work done outside of class and more in class discussion and activities. The idea was to see if new methods and more active engagement would result in higher grades, fewer Ds, Fs and Ws. The answer is “YES, BUT...” She was also chosen to participate in a NSF grant to teach sciences to non-science majors in hopes of creating a citizen population which can use science to make and evaluate public policy. The focus of her part of the grant is to do a unit on geoscience, specifically mineral resource extraction and the public policy implications of it. I am working with a chemistry professor and a geology professor. This requires a good deal of “homework” for me in basic geoscience. In addition, she created a new online PS 3050 Presidency class that will be offered this summer.

**George Vernardakis** continues his research on the selection practices, curricula, methods of instruction, and influences on public policy of the graduates of the National School of Administration (ENA) in France and the Civil Service College of the United Kingdom (CSC). This is part of a larger comparative study on the training of higher civil service in developed democracies.

**John Maynor** will be presenting two papers at the Midwestern Political Science Association meeting in April: “Slacktivism, Soft-news and Power: The Millennials to the Rescue” and “Modern Republicanism and the Capabilities Approach: Anti-power, Freedom and Well-Being.”

**Andrei Korobkov** recently co-authored a monograph in Russian (translated: The Development of Cooperation with the Russian Speaking Diaspora) published by the Russian International Affairs Council and two book chapters including “Global Security and Economic Leadership in Russia” (in *Global and Regional Leadership of BRICS Countries*). In addition, **Korobkov** has become more of a public intellectual, writing a number of op-ed pieces appearing in Russia Direct, and appearing in numerous TV, Radio and print interviews in Russia.

**Sekou Franklin** was very active in the fall, making presentations on 6 panels in the region including the Transportation Innovation Academy in Nashville, the

James Weldon John Institute for the Study of Race and Difference in Atlanta, and Annual State Convention and Civil Rights Advocacy Conference. **Franklin** also taught a three hour short course at the American Political Science Association meeting in San Francisco on “The Role of Scholar Activism.” **Franklin** also participated in MTSU’s Scholar Week and will be giving a talk this semester \*\*\*.

**Vanessa Lefler** received a FRCAC Summer Research Grant to work on her paper “Bargain Shopping for Peace? Examinations of the Strategic, Structural and Cultural Influences on Interstate Conflict Management.” She also presented research on “Two’s Company, Three’s a Crowd: Bilateral Negotiation and Agreement” at the Peace Science Society meeting in November. **Lefler** was also part of the team redesigning PS 1010 and analyzing the results of its impact on student learning

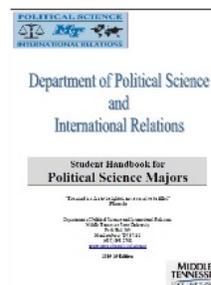
**Moses Tesi** presented a paper “Cameroon, Post-independence Foreign Policy Challenges: Domestic Prosperity and Development or Political Independence?” at the meeting of the African Studies Association in November and chaired a panel on Cameroonian politics.

**Robb McDaniel** published a book chapter “Watching the Defectives: Identity, and What the Squib Saw” in the book *Harry Potter for Nerds 2: Essays for Fans, Academics and Lit Geeks*.

**Zhen Wang** is participating in the MTSU Faculty Fellows Program this year. She also presented a paper at the meeting of the American Association of Chinese Studies, completed two book reviews and revised a paper under consideration at *The China Quarterly*.

## Check out the **STUDENT RESOURCES** PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE for information on

- *Upper division forms*
- *Student handbooks*
- *Student Services Portal (with links to information on internships, study abroad, graduate school, law schools, and CAREERS)*
- *Virtual Mentoring Program*
- *Scholarships and Awards*



## Alumni News

**Megan Moore** (IR 2012), currently at the Metro Office of Family Safety, Jean Crowe Advocacy Center Advocate, has been accepted into the Master's degree program in Gender, Development, and Globalization at the prestigious London School of Economics. She begins the one-year program in September.

**Drew Anderson** (Public Administration, 2014) recently accepted a job with the City of Murfreesboro, TN as Program Coordinator. He is working at the St. Clair Senior Center as the first Travel Program Coordinator. Drew is one of our Virtual Mentors.

**Mahmud A. Brifkani** (IR, 2013) works as Associate Editor/Legislative Analyst M. Lee Smith Publishers, a division of BLR. This is a legislative bill tracking company in Nashville. He got this job through his internship with the General Assembly. Mahmud, whose award-winning research poster is still on display in the hallway, serves as one of our Virtual Mentors.

**Arielle Woodmore** (PS, 2014) was accepted and will attend George Washington University's MPS in Political Management program.

**Adam Higgs** (PS, 2014) reports from law school. "Law school has been crazy. Dr. McDaniel was right about loving DC, hating DC, and loving to hate DC. Two weeks ago our Metro Station caught on fire somehow, so now they only have enough power to send a train through every twenty minutes at best. My girlfriend, neighbor, and I stopped an apparent robbery and sexual assault at 4AM this past Friday after hearing the girl screaming for help right outside our front door (supposedly not something that happens regularly--here's hoping). The traffic, of course, is almost laughable. But then...the monuments, energy, and people remind me every day that there is nowhere I would rather be.

I'm just hoping I don't completely screw up my first year of law school. Some days I have this sneaking suspicion that they'll realize there was some kind of clerical mistake and inform me I wasn't supposed to have gotten into the school in the first place."

**Bryan Gilley** (PS, 2014) is currently working with the City of White House, managing the visitors center and museum and assisting the chamber of commerce. He offers current students some advice:

"It took a long time to land the right job, but after a year and a half it happened. I thought public service would be easy to break into, wow was I wrong. I think what really hurt me at first was not doing an internship with a government agency. The hiring manager needs to know who you are. If I could pass on just one word of advice it would be INTERNSHIP. Not doing the right one, or not doing one at all can be detrimental to your career."

Bryan serves as one of our Virtual Mentors.

In September, **Loren Sanderson** (PS, 2008) joined the law firm of Kious, Rodgers, Barger, Holder, and Kious, PLLC as an associate attorney. Ms. Sanderson received her law degree from DePaul University College of Law in Chicago in 2012 and her bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in history from Middle Tennessee State University in 2008. Ms. Sanderson is a Rule 31 listed civil mediator and is a member of the Tennessee Bar Association and the Rutherford and Cannon County Bar Association. She is a long time member of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders & Exhibitors Association and since 2013 has served as secretary on its board of directors. Ms. Sanderson's areas of practice include divorce, child custody, child support, adoption, criminal defense, personal injury and business law.

**Elaine Eisinger** () is currently working at the Attorney General's Office in the Criminal Justice Division as assistant to the Sr. Deputy Attorney General. "It's been exciting, I enjoy the work. I'm also planning on starting at Nashville School of Law next fall!"

**Abbi Burgess** (PS, 2008) is Legislative Assistant & Correspondence Manager for U.S. Congressman Rick Crawford (AR-01). She handles several policy issues, specifically education, defense, telecommunications, taxation, science and technology, postal service, and national parks. She analyzes legislation and letters as well as provide recommendations and works on legislative solutions for her boss' initiatives, including drafting amendments to be attached to other bills, as well as crafting original legislation for consideration in the House. In order to keep the Congressman as informed as possible, she meets frequently with constituents and industry leaders about their concerns while they are in Washington, D.C. and travels back to the District to meet with people to keep my boss aware of their most pressing and recent concerns. Abbi serves as one of our Virtual Mentors.